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Our Young People. Mothers & Daughters in Council.  
I.

The world did not concern itself much about our bringing up in my day, but, now, there is no escape from the 'Education Question'; the journals are full of it, people talk of little else, imposing buildings, Board Schools or High Schools, rise on all sides, & imposing young persons correct one's old-fashioned ideas with scanty ceremony."

"Well, Mother, what do you think of it all? We live in the midst of this educational whirl, & the children devote themselves to school work as men do to the business of life; they are admirably taught, & would not willingly neglect a preparation or miss a lesson. Full of purpose & effort, they are engrossed with affairs that I have as little to do with as with their father's office business; and yet, I believe, they miss much the boys & I had in our home training, & that you, dear Mother, seem to have had still more in your quiet home."

They do. They miss their Mother; you married early, & began with a nurse so capable, that you gave the children up to her; she was followed by instructors, as capable in their

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in fact,

way; ~~it~~ it has come to pass that you  
have all along been giving place to some  
'superior person'.

A true bill, I fear; but, to begin with the  
nursel, she was very kind, & I do think  
cared for the children. Besides, she took  
excellent care of their health, a great matter  
to one who knew so little about children's  
ailments. Had you been at hand, things  
might have been different."

O yes, Child, I know; you have always  
been over-diffident, & your very regard  
for this foolish old Mother of yours has  
kept you from having needful confidence  
in yourself. I am much to blame  
that the pleasure I took in my gentle  
daughters blinded me to her deficiencies;  
you went to your new life sadly  
ignorant in many ways.

Each one now, Mother, it will be up-hill  
work, but there are still three babes in the  
nursery; something may be done with  
them, & I have not succeeded with the  
elders. Good and sweet children as  
they are, they have taken themselves out  
of my hands; not that they do much that  
is wrong, but they do what is right in  
their own eyes; I mean, when they do  
right, it is because it pleases them, not  
from any sense of duty or thought of pleasing  
themselves.

their father or me. He is little at home, and  
does nothing wrong, but is proud of the  
children; seeing they do well at school  
and are ~~so~~ <sup>very</sup> busy with their books at  
home. And, indeed, you must not think  
they are bad; ~~children~~, no mother could  
have seven brighter, more affectionate  
boys & girls."

"I am proud of my grand children, too,  
their force & sprightliness, their very independence  
of character, so charm me, I am only  
afraid of swimming with the stream; most  
likely I should soon retire from my  
duty & leave the young people to bring  
up themselves."

"That is what troubles me; I have, unconsciously,  
retired from my duty; but, indeed, it is  
not easy to keep up with what somebody  
calls the pace of the nineteenth century.  
Then, what is a Mother's duty in these  
days? Should she set her face against  
all the influences about them, & try  
to train her children after the traditions  
of her own youth?"

"No; I have seen Mothers do that, & do  
it successfully, but children so trained  
grow up behind the times; other young  
people pronounce them 'slow' & leave  
them to themselves, so they become more  
than ever formal & dull, & out of sympathy  
with



with the stirring interests about them. Besides, there is arrogance in supposing that the ways of our youth must be the best ways; we & the children will be losers if we do not believe that God is educating the world; teaching, now, new & better things than belonged to our youth, which they must be left open to receive. "I do not see any way yet; this overpowering rush of new knowledge, new ideas, on the subject of education has, indeed, caused me to allow more advanced persons to take the children in hand. It is all beyond me."

"May a Mother delegate her responsibilities to other persons?"  
How far parents are concerned with the education of their children, in what way they are pledged to keep up with the young generation, becomes a grave question. When we have to deal with a Young England, not overdone with reverence, & fully ready to depend upon, assert, & glorify itself. A new & remarkable age, truly, we are living in; courage, honesty, enterprise, & other virtues dear to it, <sup>are</sup> ~~there~~ in the virgin soil; ~~but~~ <sup>yet</sup> it would be a pity to lose ~~something~~ more retiring graces. The fact is, the elder generation cannot easily keep up with the advancing tide of opinion, & while they fall to the rear, the children go forward, following any lead in their way; parents must see to it that they begin with a 'good start' & keep ahead, if they would not be deprived of their natural & honourable office. If only men

men & women did not launch themselves on the most important of all careers without the knowledge, power or purpose which should qualify them for it! A joiner, a lawyer, a doctor, must be brought up to his business, but because a man who chooses may take up the vocation of fatherhood, very few take any pains to fit themselves for the duties of this calling."

"I hardly see what qualification could be acquired; a father should be a wise & upright man, no doubt; but is not that every man's positive duty? In his relative duty, as a father he does but give out whatever of wisdom or goodness is in him."

"He should at least know something of the very composite nature of a child, should have considered what education ought to effect, & have made up his mind to his own part in the training of a family. People are beginning to see that this kind of special preparation is to be desired for all teachers; how much more valuable would it be to parents, under whose hands their children first take form."

"But there is a difference between parents & teachers. Does not the sympathy with her children & the natural insight which comes to a mother stand her in stead of much of this difficult

"Difficult-lore, this deep reading & much thinking which it is rather appalling to think of? Then how could poor uneducated parents ever do well under such conditions?"

"Parents are, we may well believe, helped from above in a peculiar way; but ignorance is seldom docile; wherefore, in spite of all guiding, many do, as a fact, go ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~indulge~~ or stubbornly wrong in their treatment of their children. This may account for what has been set down to the discredit of religion, that ~~many~~ <sup>may be</sup> a good man's life ~~has been~~ made wretched by unworthy children: he has not known what was in them or how to train them, & the Nemesis which always pursues ignorance of a natural law has but come after him. For the poor, who does not regret the ill effects of their untaught condition, the bad habits, the want of principle, which <sup>too often,</sup> make servants a ~~domestic~~ trial & fill the Sunday School teacher with dismay."

"But am I right in thinking that the remedy you suggest would involve a course of reading <sup>in</sup> the Moral & in Physical Science such as few middle class people would have time for, & which seems to me utterly beyond the reach of the labouring poor? Surely the spread of Christianity would avail more, after all



a new empirical system of education  
 taken up as a standard & pursued throughout  
 intelligence can only be expected to  
 produce such results; but the  
 system of conceiving a better  
 method is it not new?  
 for the man who keeps on  
 trying steadily in view  
 of the progress of the  
 world is not a new  
 man.

all, than a wider knowledge of the principles of education."

"Christianity should constrain a man to do well what he knows how to do, but does not instruct him in any unknown art, does not make a man a tailor, or a woman a cook. A man must be a Christian to be capable of educating his children in the fullest sense; yet, being this, loving the truth & hating a lie, he may, for want of other knowledge, bring up his children to deceive themselves & him: into formalism, lateness, over-strictness, he may ignorantly err. It is a man's duty to know; & therefore, I think, we <sup>have no reason</sup> are not allowed to suppose <sup>any scriptural means will be used</sup> that divine grace will supplement our ignorance. Nor is the love in question really deep & difficult; physiology, theology, oriental & moral sciences, all that, it is true, with the nature, well-being & relations of human beings, & there cover a wide field; but the broad principles which should regulate action are not far to seek; & it is much to be desired that these should be brought home in simple, forcible words to the 'unlearned & ignorant', so that every man should at least know what is due to the whole nature



such various knowledge, & reading so deep. It appeals one to think of. Besides, how could poor, uneducated parents ever do well under such conditions?

Parents are, no doubt, helped from above in a wonderful way; but ignorance is hard to deal with & is seldom docile, in spite of all preaching, <sup>as a fact,</sup> often

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the bad habits, the want of principle,  
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But the remedy you suggest involves  
the study of a whole circle of sciences, deep  
study, too; for to apply a science you must  
have mastered its principles. Few middle  
class people would have time for a course of  
reading which, from the nature of it, hardly  
belongs to school life, & it <sup>does</sup> seem to  
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